Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission

390. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to launch Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the aim and the objectives of the said mission;

(d) whether it is a fact that the product/appliances of solar energy are beyond the reach of the common people in the country;

(e) if so, the details and the reaction of Government thereto; and

(f) the details of steps taken by government to bring such product within the reach of the common people?

THE MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH) : (a) to (c) Government has approved Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission to develop solar energy technologies to make solar power competitive to conventional grid power. The Mission aims at setting up of 20,000 MW grid solar power and 2,000 MW of off-grid solar power including 20 million solar lights. In addition, it aims at installation of 20 million square metre solar thermal collector area by 2022. The mission will be implemented in three phases. Government has also approved the target to set up 1,100 MW grid connected solar plants and 200 MW capacity equivalent off-grid solar applications in the first phase of the Mission, till 2012-13.

(d) to (f) Several solar energy applications such as solar water heaters and solar lights are commercially viable or close to commercial viability. Such systems are being purchased by the people through bank loans also. However, the high initial cost of solar energy systems is a barrier in large scale utilization of solar energy systems, specially for power generation.

The Ministry is supporting research and development to reduce cost, improve efficiency and overall performance of solar energy systems and also for development of new materials and devices.

The Ministry has taken several other steps to increase utilization of solar energy in the country, which include (i) expanded programmes to encourage utilization of solar energy systems through subsidy or soft loans, (ii) incentive to manufacturers, commercial users and power project developers (iii) support to Akshaya Urja shops to provide additional channels for supply and after-sales servicing of solar energy systems, and (iv) support for capacity building and for creation of awareness through print and electronic media.